

# First piping plover hatches anticipated next week

**LEWES** – Four pairs of piping plovers are incubating nests on the Point in Cape Henlopen State Park, with the first hatches anticipated as soon as next week, DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife announced today. Also, a fifth pair on the Point and a pair at Gordons Pond have chosen territories in preparation for nesting.

In other beachnester news, one American oystercatcher nest also is being incubated at Gordons Pond.

For more information about beachnesting birds and monitoring efforts, please contact Matthew Bailey at 302-382-4151 or email [matthew.bailey@delaware.gov](mailto:matthew.bailey@delaware.gov).

## ***About the piping plover***

*The piping plover was listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1986, and the Division of Fish and Wildlife is responsible for its protection in Delaware. Under a binding agreement and species management plan that DNREC made in 1990 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – the federal agency with oversight of this ESA-protected species – piping plover nesting areas at Cape Henlopen State Park are closed annually to the public to protect the shorebirds from disturbance during their nesting season from March into September. The closure, which includes the Point and smaller areas around Gordon's Pond and with both feeding habitat and nesting areas protected, has been successful, increasing the number of piping plover nesting pairs from a low of two pairs to a high of nine pairs. Piping plovers feed on small invertebrates that inhabit the intertidal zone near their nesting territories. Chicks are not fed by their parents, but rather are led to the shoreline to forage while the adults keep watch for potential threats.*

*Allowing pedestrian traffic in the intertidal zone adjoining nesting areas would disturb the vital link between nesting and foraging habitat, and risks adverse stress or mortality to the chicks.*

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